

The CONSUMERS UNION REPORT ON SMOKING AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST,
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SMOKING AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

might also be classified into high-content, moderate-content, and low-content groups, and symbols devised which would indicate at a glance to which class a brand belonged.

Legislation has also been proposed requiring a disclosure of how much nicotine and tar each filter actually removes, and forbidding the use of the term "filter" for any device which does not eliminate a stated proportion of the tars and nicotine. The essential health point, however, is not the efficiency of the filter but the amount of nicotine and tar left after filtration. Hence a statement of smoke ingredients is more useful from the health point of view than a statement of filter efficiency.

Labeling requirements, of course, would not by themselves cause smokers to stop smoking. Nor, by themselves, would they deter young people from starting. But as part of a network of reminders, they might contribute to the total effectiveness of any over-all campaign to meet the health problems posed by smoking.

New national labeling legislation, like other proposals for Congressional action on cigarettes, would not be easy to enact. Congress has rarely put through anti-industry measures in the past and, in the normal course of events, is unlikely to do so in the near future. In addition to its own employees and stockholders, the cigarette industry has as potential political allies the farmers who grow the tobacco and the many cigar store owners, newsstand proprietors, and others who sell cigarettes at retail — plus the radio, television, newspaper, magazine, and advertising agency interests which depend in part on cigarette advertising.

It is worth recalling the landmark filter-tip investigation conducted in 1957 by a House Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Representative John A. Blatnik of Minnesota. The committee report charged that cigarette makers had "deceived" the public and that the FTC had "failed in its statutory duty

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